

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA STARR AND JOHN BOATMAN IN JANE'S DEFENCE WEEKLY
JULY 2, 1994

JANE'S DEFENCE WEEKLY

July 2, 1994

Pg. 40

THE Jane's INTERVIEW

*US Defense Secretary
William J Perry has
rapidly made his
mark as a forthright
foreign policy
spokesman and a
hands-on Pentagon
reformer. He spoke to
John Boatman and
Barbara Starr*

expense of readiness, however. Perry said that while the US military has clearly kept readiness as the highest priority in the short-term, the future plans he has seen indicate that some services' support for readiness may begin to wane in three or four years. "I am concerned in what I've seen so far in both the budget and the POM exercises that there are too many instances where [the services] are falling off on medium-term readiness issues," he said.

Perry made it clear that hardware modernization would be funded in two ways: by increasing total annual budget requests later this decade, and by generating substantial savings from infrastructure and overhead cost reduction efforts such as base closings and acquisition reform.

To critics who say the US military would face difficulties if soon forced to

The USA will continue seeking South Korean and Japanese support for any military or diplomatic options for dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, says US Defense Secretary William J Perry.

"There really is no 'go it alone' strategy in Korea that is viable," said Perry. While the USA would like China's support, Perry said he could conceive of some options that would be pursued even without Beijing's approval. China has indicated it will oppose sanctions.

Perry confirmed that he has given President Clinton three graduated options for further enhancing US forces in the region. First would be deploying US support personnel to handle any potential future build-up of combat forces. Additional options call for "significant additions in combat capability". Perry declined to offer specifics, but it is generally believed the USA is considering deploying F-117s and B-52s to the region if needed.

Regarding Haiti, Perry emphasized that any US policy "has to be proportionate" to

US interests. While the USA is not directly threatened by the current military leadership in Haiti, Perry says the USA wants democracy restored there, in part to send a message throughout the region that the Clinton Administration will continue supporting elected democratic governments.

Turning to Pentagon budget and funding matters, Perry says he intends to maintain readiness as his top priority for the foreseeable future. He noted, however, that weapon modernization should once again be accorded a higher priority in the last few "out years" of the military services' six-year Program Objective Memorandum (POM) budget plans, following several years of steep cuts.

In evaluating the upcoming FY1995-2001 POM, "a principal criterion... is the extent to which we have preserved a robust return to modernization, and the extent to which that is realistic," said Perry. Such modernization is not to come at the

fight two near-simultaneous major regional conflicts (MRCs) because it does not yet have the advanced weapons called for in the Bottom-Up Review (BUR). Perry replies that the likelihood of a conflict involving Iraq or Iran is slim in the near term. "Fortunately, we believe that the South-west Asia MRC which is spelled out in the Bottom Up Review could not come at the level of the other one [the 1991 Gulf war] for many years to come." This gives the Pentagon time to complete enhancements such as weapon modernization, regional prepositioning of equipment and improved strategic lift required to handle two regional conflicts, Perry believes.

He also noted that "the BUR is truly a living document. We will be making changes in it every year, in some cases every quarter", although he stressed that fundamental changes in the BUR's projected force levels would only be made if other reduction efforts fail to generate the savings expected.

In less than six months in office, Perry has won wide respect for his candor and ability to shape US military policy, but he says he has also come under fire for those very attributes. Earlier this year, for example, Perry was criticized for publicly stating that the USA would not move to prevent the fall of Gorazde in Bosnia to Serbian forces. He said he took some of the blame for not being clear about what he meant. "It is very important to be honest and straightforward, but it is also important to be clear."

Perry also acknowledged that the Clinton Administration itself has been criticized for its foreign policies. He said there are two reasons for the "perception of lack of clarity on the part of the Administration. One is the traditional 'clear political advantage' opponents seek to gain, he said, but more generally he noted that problems such as Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia do not lend themselves to clear military solutions. JDW